

THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, CELEBRATES ITS 43RD BIRTHDAY.

By Request.

In 1766, Methodism, born in England in a small gathering of Oxford students meeting between 1729 and 1735 for their spiritual benefit, was introduced into our country in two places simultaneously by Phillip Embury in New York and by Robert Strawbridge in Maryland, extending soon in every direction through New York, New England, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and through Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. Nevertheless, this Methodism then, and until 1844, when the Southern Methodists withdrew, was one Methodism, really an ever increasing number of missionary societies, but coalescing more and more under the hands of Asbury, Rankin, and others, taking organic form in the conference of 1773 and those that followed, till in 1784, at the famous Christmas conference held in Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, the organization of the Methodist Episcopal church was effected.

Methodism then, from the beginning was a missionary enterprise, and while the Wesleyans, in England even before 1793, which is considered the beginning of the modern missionary movement in the great adventure of William Carey, and the years following, had sent out their missionaries to the West Indies and Africa, the Methodists in the United States in the process of building their church were carrying on home missions among the farthest settlers in the wilderness of our country, the negroes and the Indians. "One of the first acts of the church after its organization in Baltimore in 1784, was to arrange to send missionaries to Nova Scotia."

In April, 1819 upon the insistence of Gabriel Disosway, a well-to-do merchant of New York, the missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal church was organized, this society being designed to be the general society of the church, to which the societies to be organized in the Annual Conferences should be attached as auxiliaries. The object of the Missionary and Bible Society as started in its constitution, was "to aid the annual conferences in carrying on their missionary work throughout the United States and elsewhere." At one of its early meetings the society resolved "that the females attached to the Methodist congregations be invited to form a society auxiliary to this." The "females" accepted the invitation, and in the summer of 1819 organized a society which lived and prospered for fifty years. This is supposed to have been the first Woman's Missionary Society of any denomination in America, though since the year 1800 there had been dotted along the path of history more than a dozen individual woman's missionary societies.

Following the division of the church in 1844, both branches kept up their missionary work. The women of the Northern church were allowed to organize in 1860, but it was not till 1878 that our Southern women were permitted this privilege, though there had been individual societies organized in Baltimore in 1848 by Mrs. A. Brown Davidson, and in the Lebanon Circle, Bethlehem, Tenn., in 1858, by Mrs. M. L. Kelly, wife of a Methodist preacher, and mother of a Methodist preacher who later became a missionary to China, both being organized for definite missionary work. In 1874 a timid memorial was sent to General Conference asking for authority to organize a Woman's department of missions, but it was lost on a crowded calendar. In 1877, Bishop Marvin and Dr. Hendrix, returning from a missionary town, were urgent in their appeals for woman's work for women. The women were also carrying on a vigorous campaign, previous to General Conference, "working anxiously for permission to legalize their efforts for women and children in non-Christian lands. Editors, bishops, preachers and laymen were enlisted, appeals made through the press and from the pulpit. The women went so far as to call for volunteers, provided they should be authorized to send out missionaries, and Miss Lochie Rankin of West Tennessee, answered the call." In the meantime contributions were being sent to the missionaries on the field by

these women who were given permission to organize legally. The memorial was presented to General Conference, meeting that year in Atlanta, May 14th, with a petition "that the women of the M. E. church, South, should be authorized to work for missions under a district charter and for specified purposes." The committee considering it, reported favorably, and the organization was effected May 23rd, 1878.

The annual conferences began to organize as they convened, the North Carolina Conference being organized in Charlotte in December 1878. Mrs. N. H. D. Wilson of Greensboro, was elected Conference President; Mrs. J. A. Cunningham, of Wilson Vice-President; Mrs. F. M. Bumpass, of Greensboro, Corresponding Secretary; Miss Blanche Fentress, of Raleigh, Recording Secretary; and Mrs. E. J. Lilly, of Fayetteville, Treasurer.

On the afternoon of February 28th, 1879, Mrs. N. H. D. Wilson organized the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the M. E. Church, South, of Rockingham. The meeting was held in the church, with the following women present joining as charter members: Mrs. George Neal, Mrs. Mary Rishon, Mrs. T. W. Guthrie, Mrs. J. W. Jenkins, Mrs. W. S. Fowlkes, Mrs. J. T. LeGrand, Mrs. P. W. Stansill, Mrs. R. L. Steele, Mrs. M. C. Cooper, Mrs. Walter L. Steele, Mrs. William P. Everett, Mrs. W. F. Covington, Mrs. W. C. Thomas, Mrs. T. C. Leak, Mrs. S. W. Webb, Mrs. Ann C. Leak, Mrs. Neal Wilson, Mrs. Frank T. Biggs, Mrs. John Holt, Mrs. Sue Sanford, Mrs. Robert Ledbetter, Mrs. R. A. Johnson, Misses Ella Usary, R. McKinnon, Ida Stansill, Manie Leak, Ella Steele, and Lizzie Rishon. Mrs. Robert L. Steele was elected President, and Mrs. Walter L. Steele, Treasurer. Of the 28 charter members, Miss Ella Usary, Mrs. R. A. Johnson, Mrs. W. C. Thomas, Mrs. Frank T. Biggs, and Miss Lizzie Rishon (Mrs. Gorham of Fayetteville) are the only ones left to us, but their daughters and granddaughters, and daughters-in-law are carrying on still the work they began.

For the years from 1879 to 1901 we have no records except the Treasurer's books, but any business man might be proud of that, so beautifully neat and accurately simple, was it kept. We learn from it that the meetings were held regularly, month by month; dues, thank-offerings, self-denial made at the annual Easter meetings, supplied the funds which were sent every year to the Conference Treasurer. Our thinks as a society, are due Mrs. Walter L. Steele for her faithfulness during the years to the time of her death. In 1886 by paying \$20.00 each, Mrs. Walter L. Steele, Mrs. F. L. Wall, and Mrs. J. T. LeGrand became life members, though they continued to pay their regular dues. In 1888 a band of Bright Jewels was organized by Mrs. Marcus L. Wood, who with her husband, had been a missionary in China, and in 1889 John L. Everett was sent as its delegate to Charlotte—he still remembers the report Mrs. LeGrand wrote for him to make. A Home Mission Society was organized in December 1906, which lived and flourished till, in 1912, the Foreign and Home Societies were united to form the Woman's Missionary Society. In 1911, the Mary Steele Society named in memory of Mrs. Walter S. Steele, was organized by Mrs. W. P. Webb, in order to enlist the young women of the church, and they, later on, organized the younger girls, calling the society the Lily Duke, in honor of Miss Duke, the Conference Superintendent of Young People's Work. In 1915 The Knights of the Cross, a society of boys was formed by Mrs. R. B. Woddeil. In 1917, Mrs. George Steele, First Vice-President of the Woman's Society, organized an auxiliary among the young women, naming it "Rebecca LeGrand," in honor of Mrs. J. T. LeGrand who for many years was one of our most faithful members, this auxiliary taking the place of the Mary Steele Society which had become an adult society. In 1904, and again in 1919, the auxiliaries entertained the Annual Conference of the Woman's Missionary Society. In 1915 the Circle Plan was formulated and adopted, and our circle work begun, proving by its results to have been one of the best moves we have ever made. This plan has since been adopted by the Conference, and is gradually being inaugurated by the auxiliaries, being a

guaranteed by the auxiliaries, being a great success wherever it has been faithfully used. In 1921 the names of Mrs. Walter L. Steele and Mrs. William P. Everett, were placed upon the Memorial Roll, by their daughters, Miss Mamie Steele and Miss Bessie Everett, upon a contribution to the Memorial Fund of \$25.00 by each, who are themselves faithful and devoted members of our society.

The scope of the Woman's Missionary work has broadened, our society also has extended its work adding each new feature as it was taken up by our Council, making all the changes advocated by council, so keeping abreast of the times in missionary work, till now we are active in every department of the work of the Woman's Missionary Council. Our offerings have grown also with the years, though perhaps not in proportion to our material prosperity. The local work of the church, including its charities and the clothing of several children at our orphanage in Raleigh, is well organized and efficiently carried on through the missionary societies. It has been our privilege to have with us at different times during the years, Miss Belle Bennett, Miss Blanche Howell, Miss Mary Pescud, Miss Mamie Myers, Miss Daisy Davies, Miss Elizabeth David (Mrs. W. G. Borchers) Miss Elizabeth Lamb, Dr. Mumpower, Bishop Smith, Mr. Kuyginiya, Miss May Edla Smith, Mrs. Harvey Boney, Mrs. N. H. D. Wilson, and Miss Lillie Duke. Others perhaps whom I can not remember.

On the afternoon of February 28th our society met in our church parlor, which had been beautifully decorated for the occasion with a profusion of greens, and the lovely early flowers of spring, jonquils, narcissus and freesias, to celebrate its 43rd birthday, having with us as specially invited guests, Mrs. W. G. Borchers, at home with her husband on furlough, from Brazil, and Miss Elizabeth Lamb, of Fayetteville, who gave herself almost her life, in many years missionary service in Brazil, also the Mary Steele and Rebecca LeGrand auxiliaries. After an opening hymn Miss Lamb was introduced by the President to conduct the devotional. Her subject was the Divinity of Christ and the Inspiration of the Scriptures, with selected passages from the Bible supporting her argument, as well as passages from secular periodicals against it. She dwelt upon the tenacity of the day in our church, and in others too, towards rationalism and modernism. While allowing to any person the right to think as he or she pleased, she established the point that as members of the Methodist church we avowed our belief in the Divinity of Christ, His virgin birth, His resurrection in the body, in short the creed itself, when we joined the church and that we can not believe otherwise and be loyal to our church and ourselves. She urged us as individuals, and as a society, to do all in our power towards the putting away all rationalistic teachings from our own schools and colleges and pulpits. Mrs. Borchers made a most interesting and instructive talk on the Woman's Missionary work in Brazil as carried on by the women of our church for Brazil, and by the Brazilian women themselves, who have their own missionary societies through which they also are doing missionary work, sending contributions to unchristianized lands. A little ceremony had been planned in honor of Mrs. F. T. Briggs, our only active charter-member, but because of her absence on account of illness, it was omitted. The program having ended, delicious refreshments were served by Mrs. R. R. Simmons, and an hour of pleasant social intercourse soon passed.

In a last retrospective glance, we see that many of our women have been faithful, some have always been the "faithful few" upon whom we know we could always rely for whatever was needed in our work, but amidst them all there stand out conspicuously the names of three women to whom the life of our society is due, for during several years of carelessness and little interest, they in succession held it together by their progress, their constant efforts to keep up the interest, their faith in and love of the cause. As a society we can not do too much honor to Mrs. Fannie Wood Steele, Mrs. Rebecca Wilson LeGrand and Mrs. W. P. Webb.

In closing, let me leave this thought with you: "Methodism itself is a missionary system. Yield the Missionary spirit, and you yield the very life blood of the cause." MRS. J. LeGRAND EVERETT.

SOCIAL

(Contributed)

Friday afternoon at her home on Randolph street, Mrs. W. S. Thomas was hostess for the Married Ladies' Bridge Club. The game was thoroughly enjoyed. Special guests of the club were: Mrs. Walter E. Story, Mrs. Minor T. Hinson, Mrs. O. L. Henry, Mrs. Morris Purvis. The hostess served sandwiches and tea.

At the home of Mrs. Hatt Stansil Friday afternoon Mrs. Harvey Terry and Mrs. George Davis were charming hostesses at an unusually elaborate Rook party, honoring Miss Mamie Nicholson West, a bride of next week. Spring flowers were used in profusion. Rook was enjoyed during several progressions before the cards were recalled and chicken croquettes, green peas, hot biscuits, tomatoes, celery and hot coffee, sea foam and chocolate candy were served, to Miss Mamie West and mother, Mrs. James T. West, Misses Bertha West, Florence Covington, Lizzie and Jamie Cole, Marie and Tess Covington, Lucile Shore, Ophelia Ormond, Betsey Long, Octavia Scales, Laura Page Steele, Hallie and Caroline Covington, Mary Entwistle, Anna Leak Ledbetter, Vessie Terry, Kate Finley, Lillian Long, Elizabeth Cole, Ruth Covington, Georgia Biggs, Addie Webb, Johnnie Cameron, Mesdames Minor T. Hinson, W. T. Covington, Joe Stephenson, J. W. Leak, Stansil Covington, Frank Leak, Fred Bynum, Mial W. Leak, W. F. Long, Jr., George S. Steele, Willie Fowlkes, H. F. Long, R. T. Nichols, Bert Terry, W. C. Nichols, Roy Morton, W. A. McAulay, Archie Biggs, C. E. D. Egerton, Frederick Dickson. Little Miss Eleanor Williams assisted in serving and took the cards at the door. The hostesses presented to the bride-to-be exquisite white satin

hand-made garments for her trousseau.

Mr. James Garrett spent the last week end in Rockingham, having come from Danville, Va.

Misses Elizabeth Cole and Anna Leak Ledbetter spent the week end in Spartanburg with friends at Converse College. Miss Cole remained over in Charlotte to visit with Culberthson for a few days before returning to Rockingham.

Miss Sudie Jenkins spent several days at home with her parents, having come from Converse college.

Dr. Will Steele is spending several days in Lake City, S. C., having gone there Tuesday.

Miss Horn, who has been stopping at Mrs. William Little Steele's, for several weeks has gone to Wadesboro to visit her brother.

Miss Ruth Harrison returned Sunday night from Greensboro, whither she has been visiting her Uncle, Mr. Billy Allen.

Friends in the city will be glad to learn that the condition of Mr. J. S. Ledbetter is showing some improvement now.

Tuesday afternoon Miss Addie Webb entertained most delightfully, honoring Miss Mamie West. The decorations were of spring flowers. Seven tables. Rook was the diversion. At each place was a celluloid doll draped in green, with a shamrock cap tied with a white ribbon. After the game, delicious refreshments were served: stuffed tomatoes, chicken salad, crackers, pickle, hot rolls, and ice tea. Just at this juncture little LeGrand Long appeared on the scene dressed in green and wearing a Shamrock cap, bringing to the bride-to-be a basket of handsome linen, embroidered pillow cases, towels, exquisite Madeira napkins, handkerchiefs, etc. Mrs. Webb presented the honoree with a handsome set of Madeira napkins, and Miss Webb gave her a card

table set, with cover and tea napkins to match, in yellow linen.

Mrs. and Mrs. John B. Brewer went to Raleigh on Wednesday of last week to hear the Rev. George W. Truett, Evangelist. They were the guests of Mr. Chas. Brewer at Meredith College, and Mr. T. W. Brewer, in West Raleigh. Mr. Brewer returned to Rockingham Friday evening. Mrs. Brewer visited relatives and friends in Wake Forest and Franklinton, returning Sunday evening.

A unique affair was that on Wednesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. George Steele when Mrs. Steele and Miss Georgia Biggs entertained at a pre-nuptial party for Miss Mamie West. The guests were members of the Rebecca LeGrand Missionary Society, of which Miss West is a member, and the members of the bride's family. Arranged were five tables for a Shakespearean romance contest, which was most enjoyed. At each place at the tables were dainty red baskets, the handles of which were tied with white ribbon and orange blossoms. The bride's basket was tied with red wedding bells, and all were filled with red and white mints. These were souvenirs of the occasion. The contest over, each guest wrote a toast on the reverse side of the red heart on which the contest was written, to the bride, and they were real gems, too.

These were presented to the bride, of course. Mrs. Steele and Miss Biggs presented Miss West with a handsome Sapphire and Pearl pin. Refreshments were a salad course followed with ice cream topped with whipped cream, cak and red and white mints.

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